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update

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UNDP offers immediate relief aid to earthquake victims in Turkey

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) are co-ordinating immediate relief aid to the victims of the March 13 earthquake in eastern Turkey. Estimates are that 800 to 1,000 have died, a similar number have been injured, and 180,000 have been left homeless by the quake.

The UN began its relief operations within 24 hours of the earthquake. The UNDRO/UNDP office acted as a clearinghouse for information and co-ordination of international contributions to Turkey. UNDP Resident Representative in Ankara, Ed Cain, called a donors meeting the day of the quake to co-ordinate the UN response and consolidate government requests for assistance. Mr. Cain immediately visited the disaster sites to assess needs and review the distribution of relief supplies.

Shelter is the first priority for the 180,000 people left homeless in Erzincan and the surrounding villages. UNDP has released funds for winterized tents and other relief supplies. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is also supplying 1,700 tents, 1,300 blankets, and prefabricated housing materials. UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has supplied a plane load of relief and medical supplies. The World Health Organization (WHO) agreed to lend the Government a mobile satellite unit for communications. The Turkish Red Crescent (Kizilay) delivered immediate relief supplies.

New UNDP office for Bulgaria; technical advisers for Baltic Republics

UNDP is planning to open a field office in Sofia, Bulgaria within two months, and will be sending a technical adviser to each of the Baltic Republics by June. Representatives from the Governments of Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia visited UNDP headquarters on 9-20 March to learn first-hand how UNDP operates, and to determine specific arrangements for cooperation.

The Baltic government representatives expressed the need to strengthen their central banks and to introduce new currency in their countries. They also highlighted development of the private sector as an immediate priority in supporting the countries' transition from centralized to market-oriented economies.

Protection of the environment also figures prominently in the development plans of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Bulgaria is actively participating in the clean-up of the Danube River and the Black Sea within the framework of the Global Environment Facility. Each official voiced the need for UNDP technical assistance, especially to build national management skills at all levels of government administration and state and private business.

Bulgaria has had a UNDP programme of assistance since the early 1970s and is now formulating its fifth UNDP country programme. The Baltic Republics plan to draft their first-ever country programmes by December 1992. UNDP will also manage a technical cooperation trust fund for the Baltic States.

Political changes in South Africa bring shift in UN assistance

UNDP is laying the groundwork for providing technical assistance to South Africa during the country's transition to a non-racial democracy. In a recent series of consultations with multilateral donors and the UN Centre Against Apartheid, UNDP has been making plans to help mobilize resources and identify national needs in such sectors as education, health, and employment.

Since 1974, UNDP has been supporting education and health programmes for South Africans in exile. Until the UN Secretary-General reviews the new political situation in South Africa, no United Nations technical assistance can be provided inside the country. In the meantime, UNDP is preparing its technical assistance programme to be ready for launch once the interim government is in place.

As part of this process, UNDP convened an informal consultation of the core group of multilateral organizations on technical assistance for South Africa in February in New York. The participants — including the African Development Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the UN Centre Against Apartheid, and the World Bank — recommended that preparations begin for a donors' pledging conference to be held during the second half of 1992. Such a conference would address

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South Africa's needs in education, including informal, vocational and professional training.

Grants available for community environment projects with global potential

UNDP is establishing a $5 million Small-Grants Programme under the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to support small-scale activities by community groups and non-governmental organizations in developing countries. The GEF is a three-year pilot programme managed by UNDP, the UN Environment Programme and the World Bank, to assist developing countries in protecting the global environment. It is implemented by UNDP, the World Bank and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

To be eligible for support from the Small-Grants Programme, activities must address the problems of global warming, pollution of international waters, destruction of biological diversity, or depletion of the ozone layer. Priority will be given to community-based activities that could have an impact on the global environment if replicated over time, on a large scale.

Activities that might be funded include projects to develop, test and market energy-efficient household products. Other examples could involve crop diversification and soil renewal to preserve biodiversity, parks management, or activities that would both identify and conserve species. Environmental education efforts or community mobilization and advocacy projects would also be considered for funding.

Awards to individual countries will range from $1,000 to $50,000. Awards for regional projects are expected to range from $50,000 to $250,000.

Countries now under consideration for this programme are Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Malaysia, Malawi, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, and Zimbabwe.

Inquiries about the GEF Small-Grants Programme in these pilot countries should be addressed to the corresponding UNDP field office. Inquiries about funding sub-regional or regional projects should be addressed to: GEF Small-Grants Programme, NGO Programme, UNDP, One United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, ATTN: Jane W. Jacqz, Senior Adviser.

Namibia's public sector gets an overhaul

The Management Development Programme of UNDP will provide training and support for a comprehensive programme to improve public sector management in Namibia. International and national experts and short-term consultants will comprise the principal technical resource for this effort to strengthen the country's public sector.

The new Government of Namibia inherited a public service that was not technically prepared to carry out policies of national reconstruction, economic development and social justice. This two-year project, to be executed by Namibia's Office of the Prime Minister, will help restructure the government machinery and establish the necessary institutional mechanisms for efficient public service management.

UNDP support will help improve financial management control systems to reduce operational costs. Experts will inventory and upgrade available office equipment in relevant ministries. Consultants will strengthen Namibia's capacity to produce and disseminate government publications. Technical competence will be improved in computer data processing and information management systems.

Viet Nam gains legal and banking advice

UNDP's $100 million five-year technical assistance programme for Viet Nam will serve as a catalyst for foreign investment, critical to the country's economic growth. It fits the priorities of Viet Nam's recently-approved 1992-97 country programme: economic reform, human development, economic production, and environment and human settlement projects.

The government will receive advice on contract and business laws, which will become increasingly important as Viet Nam's economy expands. UNDP recently funded a lawyer to counsel the Ministry of Justice on the types of consultants it should retain. A management and supervisory system will be set up for all banking activities. These efforts are part of the country's drive to develop and expand its economy.

Donors support economic reform in Lao People's Democratic Republic

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is hastening its shift from a centrally-controlled economy to a more liberal, market-oriented one. Confirming contributions of $500 million for development assistance, donor countries last month reiterated their commitment to the country's economic reform programme at a Round Table meeting in Geneva, organized by UNDP.

The Indo-China nation is taking measures to improve tax administration, banking and public sector management. It has been encouraging privatization, trade and foreign investment.

The donor meeting reviewed the government's $745 million Public Investment Programme, covering the period 1991-95. Nearly 40 projects were presented to donors for external support. The largest allocation of the investment programme is for road transportation — vital in a land-locked, mountainous country. Other priority sectors are electric power, agriculture, telecommunications, manufacturing, mining, health services and education.

UNDP and the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic recently formulated the 1992-96 fifth country programme. With a budget of $41.3 million, this assistance will concentrate on strengthening the country's capacity for managing development programmes.

Projects Approved

(all projects subject to modification; sums quoted in US dollars)

Benin — This project will serve as a model for enabling people's participation in the development process of the whole country. A training programme will be organized and operated, which will strengthen the ability of local communities to formulate and manage their own development initiatives. The overall aim will be to help local communities improve economic conditions.

Proposed UNDP contribution: US$2,273,200 for an expert in rural development, a UNV agricultural expert, a sociologist, international and national consultants and administrative support. Executed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development. (BEN/90/006-BEN/85-C01)

Colombia — The 1,300-kilometre Chocó region extends along the Pacific coast from Ecuador through Colombia to Panama. Pressures have mounted to develop this area, which has rich biodiversity and enormous mining, agricultural and shipping potential. Before any investment plan begins, an inventory of the region's ecology will be undertaken.

This Global Environment Facility (GEF) project will support research on indigenous communities and assist with the cataloguing the region's flora and fauna. The land tenure situation of local populations will be assessed. Project data will help community groups, scientific institutions and governmental agencies plan their own strategies for sustainable development of the region.

GEF budget: US$6,250,899. Government of Switzerland contribution: $3 million. Colombian Government cost-sharing: $3 million. Funds will be used for international experts in taxonomy, biodiversity, economic development and communications, and national consultants in biology, botany, sociology, education, and engineering. Government executed and implemented by the Ministry of Environment. (COL/92/G31/1/1G/99)

Iran — The immediate aims of this project are to design and prepare cost estimates for an environmentally-sound and financially cost-effective mass transit system for the Isfahan Metropolitan area, one of the country's major industrial zones. UNDP will assist in the feasibility study and preparation of tender documents for construction of the transit system. Iranian engineers will receive training.

UNDP contribution: US$500,000. Government cost-sharing: $700,000. Funds will be used for consultants, computer hardware and software, experts from UNDP's TOKTEN programme (Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals). Government executed and implemented by Isfahan Metro Company. (IRA/91/004)

Mozambique — The Ministry of Education has developed an action plan for the development of education through the year 2000. The strategy is geared toward improving access to books, strengthening teaching methods, and expanding the school network. One important aim is to increase primary and secondary enrolment.

Project support will improve education planning and teacher training capabilities in the Ministry of Education. Training programmes and instructional materials will be provided to 3,000 primary school teachers. A teacher training network will be established in 34 districts. The Institute of Teacher Upgrading will receive technical support to develop teacher training policies and curriculum. Ten UNVs in the fields of engineering and architecture will assist in renovating schools.

UNDP contribution: US$3,236,354 for UNVs, specialists in bilingual teacher training, mathematics, physics and social sciences. Government executed and implemented by Ministry of Education. (MOZ/91/006)

Uruguay — Internal migration to the capital city, Montevideo, has placed pressure on education and health services. The Government of Uruguay requested UNDP to provide technical assistance for its national social investment programme and to help design and evaluate social infrastructure projects for refurbishing health centres, schools and community centres. Personnel in the National Administration of Public Education and the Ministry of Public Health will be trained to prepare bids and supervise projects creating infrastructure for social services.

Funds of US$2,571,350 from government cost-sharing will provide an expert for preparing and analyzing social investment projects, national consultants for administration and financial management of programmes, bidding preparations, and supervision of public works. Government executed and implemented by the Office of Budget and Planning. (URU/91/012)

Uruguay — The government is streamlining social policies to more efficiently allocate resources for education, health and nutrition programmes. UNDP will help design and put into operation an information system and new administrative procedures for carrying out the government's social programmes. The project will involve the private sector in the planning and delivery of social services. This will

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help contain costs and ensure that the neediest receive benefits in health, education and nutrition.

Funds of US$2,700,000 from government cost-sharing will provide a technical adviser and international experts in health, nutrition and education. Government executed and implemented by the Planning and Budget Office. (URU/92/001)

Interregional projects:

INT/88/718 — UNDP Special Programme Resources (SPR) have been allocated for the continued operation of the Disaster Management Training Programme. UNDP and the UN Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) administer this inter-agency programme. The additional SPR funds will be used for disaster preparedness training courses for staff of UNDP and other UN agencies. Those trained will, in turn, train others in the field. The courses will cover disaster preparedness, disaster mitigation and disaster management. The purpose is to strengthen the ability of field offices to respond to natural and man-made disaster situations.

US$700,000 from the SPR will be used for consultants, travel, equipment and development of the training programmes. Executed by UNDP.

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Human Development